

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 4646

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR YO

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ACTING FOREIGN SECRETARY ON TITO SPEECH

REF : BELGRADE 4533, STATE 202839

1. SINCE THERE WAS NO APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE HIS JESENICE CHARGES WITH TITO IN ZAGREB, I SOUGHT APPOINTMENT WITH ACTING FOREIGN SECRETARY MOJSOV IMMEDIATELY AFTER MY RETURN TO BELGRADE IN ORDER TO UNDERLINE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE VIEWED ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING OUR BEHAVIOR IN CYPRUS.

2. I MET WITH MOJSOV YESTERDAY FOR ALMOST AN HOUR AND SPOKE ALONG LINES HARTMAN DEMARCHE TO GRANFIL, DOWNPLAYING, HOWEVER, POSSIBLE IMPACT OF TITO'S REMARKS ON SECRETARY'S TRAVEL PLANS. WHILE I AGREE THIS SHOULD BE MENTIONED IN ANY WASHINGTON EXCHANGE, I KNOW FROM PAST EXPERIENCE THAT SUCH APPROACH IN BELGRADE IS READ BY SENSITIVE YUGOSLAVS AS THREAT OR PRESSURE AND IS USUALLY COUNTERPRODUCTIVE LOCALLY. MOJSOV REACTED TO MY REPRESENTATIONS IN SOMEWHAT EMOTIONAL WAY, STRESSING THAT WE SHOULD LOOK AT TITO'S SPEECH IN ITS ENTIRETY AND IN ANY CASE RECOGNIZE THAT TITO DID NOT MENTION UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OR ANY GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL BUT SIMPLY CIA AND NATO. HE SAID YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT DEEPLY RESENTED PRESS SPOKESMAN'S CHARACTERIZATION OF TITO'S REMARKS AS HIGHLY INSULTING TO PRESIDENT, REMINDING ME THAT SUCH STATEMENTS IF PUBLISHED IN YUGOSLAVIA WOULD BE IN CONTRAVENTION OF PRESS LAW WHICH FORBIDS DEFAMATION OF ANY HEAD OF STATE. I MADE APPROPRIATE REJOINDERS TO MOJSOV'S REMARKS.

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3. MOJSOV, IN CONCLUDING MEETING, SAID THAT TITO DID NOT INTEND TO WORSEN RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES; ON THE CONTRARY, TITO FELT STRONGLY, AS DID ALL YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS, THAT WE SHOULD MAINTAIN DIALOGUE AND EXPRESS OUR VIEWS ON WORLD ISSUES OPENLY AND FRANKLY. HE NOTED THAT SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH MINIC WOULD PROVIDE PROPER FORUM FOR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS--INCLUDING THE REMARKS MADE BY PRESIDENT TITO. HE SAID GOY WELCOMED WORD THAT SECRETARY WOULD VISIT BELGRADE IN NOVEMBER AND HOPED WE WOULD NOT SEIZE ON REMARKS OUT OF TOTAL CONTEXT IN ORDER TO POSTPONE OR CANCEL VISIT.

4. COMMENT: GIVEN MOJSOV'S EMOTIONAL REACTION, I AM NOT SURE THAT MY ECHO IN BELGRADE OF WASHINGTON DEMARCHE EASED SITUATION, BUT I FELT IT DESIRABLE ENSURE THAT GRANFIL, NOT THE WORLD'S BEST REPORTER, CONVEYED THE MESSAGE ACCURATELY. I HAVE IMPRESSION FROM BOTH MOJSOV'S BEHAVIOR AND HIS STATEMENTS THAT THERE WILL BE NO PUBLIC CORRECTION OF THE RECORD. I AM SURE THAT DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZES THAT GIVEN NATURE OF YUGOSLAV POLITICAL SYSTEM WITH ITS TOTAL REVERENCE FOR TITO, NO YUGOSLAV BUREAUCRAT WOULD HAVE THE GUTS TO SUGGEST A PRIVATE APOLOGY OR A PUBLIC RECASTING OF TITO'S VERSION OF EVENT ON CYPRUS. THE MOST WE CAN HOPE FOR I BELIEVE IS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY MINIC IN RESPONSE TO FRANK TALK BY SECRETARY WHEN THE TWO MEET IN NEW YORK THAT THE OLD MAN WAS ILL-INFORMED AND WENT TOO FAR. THIS IN ITSELF I FEEL WOULD BE USEFUL EXERCISE.
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